

OTHER NOTICES

Bach, Francis. (Editor). *Rheumatism and You. (Handbook for the Rheumatic Sufferer.)* London, 1951. British Rheumatic Association. Pp. 70.

THE degree to which the lay public should be educated in medical matters is a controversial question. There are those who argue that, in this enlightened age, the public should be better informed about the technical aspects of their diseases. Others do not agree that this is a particularly enlightened age in this respect and argue that to tell too much to patients who have not undergone a scientific discipline is likely to lead to unfortunate misinterpretation. That the public is still extraordinarily ignorant as to the nature of the rheumatic diseases is clear to any physician attempting to deal with patients suffering from this group of diseases; perhaps this ignorance tends to be fostered by some modern advertising methods.

Dr. Francis Bach, the editor of *Rheumatism and You*, is to be congratulated on his avoidance of these dangers and he has succeeded in producing an extremely valuable little booklet which should be in the hands of every rheumatic sufferer. He has collected together in a convenient form factual information as to the many facilities available for these patients, from the administrative, welfare, rehabilitation and therapeutic standpoints. In his introduction he rightly emphasizes the important hereditary and constitutional factors in many rheumatic diseases. The evidence that rheumatic fever, gout and ankylosing spondylitis have a familial incidence is strong. It is possible also that hereditary factors have some role in rheumatoid and osteo-arthritis as well. The chapter on the role of the Hospital Almoner by Miss Edminson is of the greatest importance, since the Almoner holds the key to all the other services.

If any criticism is to be offered it is that the pioneer work of Lord Horder and the Empire Rheumatism Council in initiating and fostering both public and professional interest in research into the fundamental problems of the rheumatic diseases and in stimulating the development of an adequate service to these patients, has received insufficient recognition.

It is to be hoped that this booklet will be made readily available to all patients attending Rheumatism and Physical Medicine Departments.

R. M. MASON.

de Beer, G. R. *Vertebrate Zoology: An Introduction to the Comparative Anatomy, Embryology and Evolution of Chordate Animals.* London, 1951. Sidgwick & Jackson. Pp. xv + 435, 185 figures. Price 32s. 6d.

THIS well-known work in the series of "Text-

Books of Animal Biology" is aptly planned to meet the needs of the zoological student. Attention is first devoted to the systematic anatomy of individual species exemplifying major trends in vertebrate evolution, and this section is followed by an outline of the embryology of selected types. These portions of the book may therefore be read *pari passu* with a course of laboratory work; thus equipped the student can then profitably devote himself to the remaining chapters, which deal with comparative zoology and evolutionary morphology.

The first edition (in 1928) of Dr. de Beer's book was reprinted no less than seven times during twenty years, an eloquent testimony to the rapidity with which it came to be regarded as a standard text. In this new edition (smaller by seventy-five pages as a result of resetting of the type), although there are small alterations to the majority of chapters the book remains essentially unchanged. Among the more important revisions are those in the chapters on embryology and primate evolution. Thus the views on the origin of the mesoderm have been revised, and the remarkably widespread contributions of the neural crest are given recognition, whilst an increased caution is evident in the relation of Man to other Primates.

In a few places minor errors have been perpetuated. For instance, in attributing antlers solely to the male of deer (p. 224) the author appears to have overlooked the reindeer. Those engaged in the study of tumours will receive somewhat quizzically the statements that the progressing elongation of the rodent incisor tooth when the opposing tooth is lost "in a sense . . . may be compared with the unruly growth of a tumour." (p. 117); and that "in bony fish the thyroid is not enclosed in a capsule of connective tissue, with the result that when it undergoes abnormal growth (goitre) it may become carcinomatous . . ." (p. 344). Again, some anthropologists who read this book may well contest the suggestion that Eoanthropus (Pittdown Man) is possibly "very close to the line of man's descent, if not his ancestor" (p. 398).

Such minor points of criticism do not materially detract from the value of this well-written outline of the zoology of vertebrates, and there is no doubt that the present edition will continue to enjoy the good reception afforded its predecessor.

LESLIE L. R. WHITE.

Chandrasekhar, S. *Demographic Disarmament for India: A Plea for Family Planning.*

Baroda, 1951. Pp. 39. No price given.

"THOUSANDS live on our pavements and lead a parody of life." Sentences such as this burst through Dr. Chandrasekhar's scholarly pamphlet and light up the harshness and the immensity of India's population problem. Dr. Chandrasekhar

is the founder and present director of the Indian Institute for Population Studies and his presidential address to the First All-India Conference of the Family Planning Association last November is reproduced in this booklet.

The rate of increase of the Indian population is compared with that of other countries to emphasize the problem of a net addition of nearly five million per year which nullifies all efforts to improve the admittedly very low standard of living of the Indian people. India is in the early expanding phase of the demographic cycle, and such figures as are available from the somewhat inadequate vital statistics are given to underline the salient features of India's problem. Social factors that complicate the picture are early and almost universal marriage, the scarcity of women and the ban on widow remarriage.

From the outline of the problem Dr. Chandrasekhar turns to the possible solutions, and considers that, though land cultivation can be increased, industrialization of the country will prove more important because it will not only provide the badly needed commodities but will also introduce patterns of life which will lead to control of the high birth-rate. The last half of this pamphlet is concerned with the last and most important solution of the problem, birth control, and the speaker states quite flatly that "it is too late in the day for India to discuss the pros and cons." Alas, it is clearly still all too necessary to do just this, as Dr. Chandrasekhar himself demonstrates by carefully answering all the various well-known objections.

There appears to be a distinction between Gandhi's attitude of objection to all methods except moral restraint and that of orthodox Hinduism; for according to Dr. Chandrasekhar, if the Hindu religion was scrupulously observed, there would be no population problem and certainly no Hindu violates his conscience by practising contraception.

In the section on methods, voluntary sterilization is favoured as an immediate measure and the possibility of compulsory measures in cases of epilepsy, insanity, leprosy and mental defectiveness is welcomed. Earlier Dr. Chandrasekhar spoke of "the depressing qualitative aspect" of the Indian population problem and linked its improvement with the solution of the quantitative problem.

The Planning Commission, under the chairmanship of the Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, reported last year in favour of the Indian Government providing contraception and sterilization for medical reasons, and stated that this help should also be available to women needing it on social and economic grounds. It also urged the need for research for a simple method of birth control. Dr. Chandrasekhar ends by an appeal for immediate action on this report and, should it be implemented, it will be of immense significance not only for India but for the world. RACHEL CONRAD.

Davis, S. *Race-Relations in Ancient Egypt: Greek, Egyptian, Hebrew, Roman.* London, 1951. Methuen. Pp. xiii + 176. Price 21s.

THE author, Dr. Davis, is senior lecturer on classics and Hofmeyr fellow in classical archaeology in the University of Witwatersrand, at Johannesburg, where presumably race-relations come to his notice daily. From the abundance of his references to ancient authors, inscriptions and papyri it is evident that he has brought much scholarship to bear on the subject. For the purpose of the *EUGENICS REVIEW*, however, the question is not whether Dr. Davis has written a valuable book on history, but whether it contains anything of relevance to eugenics. From the title of the book one might expect it to do so. There is not in this book any formal definition of the word "race"; but from the context one can gather that the decisive criteria of any person's "race" have been taken to be the language, the religious practices, and the other social customs of that person's parents; with a possible backward glance towards grandparents, or more distant ancestors, if known. Bodily characteristics, such as skin colour or nose form, are never mentioned; and this abstention, by an author at Johannesburg, looks like a deliberate disregard of such facts. Inter-marriage, or prohibitions of it, are often mentioned. Allusions to biological inheritance are expressed in the ordinary, but ineffectual, manner in terms of the fanciful concepts of "pure blood" and "mixed blood"; genes are not mentioned.

But if you wish, for example, to know how and why anti-Semitism began in Alexandria at about the time of the change from Ptolemaic to Roman rule, Dr. Davis will tell you much about it, and will provide you with copious references to further information. The critique of this book from the historical point of view must be left entirely to other reviewers.

L. F. RICHARDSON.

Lederberg, Joshua. (Editor). *Papers in Microbial Genetics—Bacteria and Bacterial Viruses.* Madison (Wisconsin), 1951. University of Wisconsin Press. Pp. xx + 303. Price \$3.75.

THE teaching of genetics at an advanced level cannot be based on ordinary text-books alone. Review articles, invaluable for the mature research worker, do not give the intimate insight into the laboratory which the advanced student requires; in any case, such articles are rarely accessible to whole groups of students. For the advanced student it is essential to become familiar with original papers in various specialized fields; this alone will ensure that he fully understands the origins of the various concepts in genetics, the methods of experimental approach and in general all the snags which beset biological research. However, as most journals are represented by a single library copy in most places, the reading of

original papers on an adequate scale by groups of students is pretty well impossible. For this reason it is greatly to be welcomed that Dr. Lederberg has provided for his students, as supplementary reading to a course on bacterial genetics, a fascimile reprint of twenty key papers; an introduction and additional list of references puts these papers in their proper perspective. It is to be hoped that this example may soon be followed for other specialized fields of genetics where there is the same need. H. GRÜNEBERG.

Smith, M. B. *The Single Woman of Today.* London, 1951. Watts. Pp. xiv + 130. Price 6s.

THE avowed purpose of this book is "to arouse public understanding to take some of the sting out of the terms 'spinster' and 'old maid,' and to point a finger in the direction where lie alleviating and socially acceptable compensations." Both hard facts and moving case histories can alter opinions and Miss Smith uses them in bewildering juxtaposition as she races through the conditioning of women by various civilizations to the Freudian analysis of a girl's development and on to the Protestant view of celibacy and the value of marriage bureaux.

The factually minded will be disconcerted by the presentation of statistics and will look in vain for clear references and the usual one chapter, one topic discipline. In the sex-ratio section, it is difficult at times to know whether this country or the U.S.A. is under discussion and surely it would have been relevant and encouraging to alleviate the

despairing note of the book, by quoting the Population Commission's conclusion that "at the reproductive ages the present small excess of women may give way to a small excess of men."

To reach emotional maturity, the single woman has to overcome not only the frustration of her normal sexual and maternal instincts but also society's subtle disapproval of her unmarried state. In the author's view, psychoanalysis may help the few but her main hope is from a change in social attitude to the spinster. Why, then, antagonize her readers by phrases like "a certain degeneracy in man's choice of a mate" and "it is a major tragedy of our time that the desirable woman is often consigned to the ranks of the surplus, whilst the inferior woman is chosen in marriage"?

After hinting at desirable fundamental changes in marriage customs without facing their implications, the author dismisses as unsatisfactory, both emotionally and socially, homosexuality and extra-marital relations and concludes that the least inadequate forms of sublimation are in wide interests and jobs which allow for the play of a woman's emotional nature.

When Miss Smith writes "a woman should be valued for what she is as a woman, whether she be married or single," she appeals directly to each of us to treat each other as individual personalities, and to disregard all labels which classify us into groups and categories. Had the book been imbued with this spirit throughout, it could have linked the single woman's problems with those common to us all, instead of isolating her still further.

RACHEL CONRAD.

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